

IMMIGRATION AND GOP'S ATTACK ON WORKING PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call attention to the outright assault on working people in America by the Trump administration.

When candidate Trump ran and carried States like Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin, he promised to renegotiate NAFTA to secure U.S. jobs and stop outsourcing. He said he would fight to raise people's paychecks.

Well, wages aren't keeping up with the cost of living as workers backslide on hourly wages, while healthcare and prescription drug costs rise and retirement benefits are being cut.

This week, Harley Davidson just announced it will outsource hundreds of jobs because of the Trump trade war. Meanwhile, the NAFTA trade deficit remains far too high under the Trump administration. That means more lost U.S. jobs and a diminished middle class.

Now, why has President Trump delayed NAFTA renegotiations so critical to creating a level playing field both in our country and across our continent?

Instead of renegotiating NAFTA to heal these gaping deficits and to prevent pitting one group of workers against another on this continent, he is targeting the lowest wage workers in the Americas and tearing them apart from their children, their families, and their communities. Most are agricultural workers who work in grueling jobs, for which U.S. citizens rarely apply.

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Let me bring you to Ohio. Just in the past 3 weeks, Ohio communities have faced six massive worker raids at two Corso Lawn and Garden centers and at four Fresh Mark animal slaughter facilities.

America has a choice: We can either grow and process our food and floriculture inside this country; or, if we fail to tend it, we will outsource more and more of our production and be forced to import more food and cede more jobs that relate to agriculture.

These worker raids create a climate of fear where workers are too afraid to stand up for their rights, to report wage theft, or to redress dangerous work conditions facing them.

Working in a meat slaughterhouse is among the most dangerous jobs in the United States of America. NAFTA forces workers who work in these jobs to exist in a shadow economy and be treated as, yes, less than human.

The raw truth is NAFTA was purposefully designed to create an exodus of millions of displaced small farmers in the Mexican countryside who have become an exploitable underclass of vast dimension across this continent. Millions and millions of small farmers were turned off their land, forming an endless pool of cheap, exploitable labor

in the Americas. I call it the most significant continental sacrilege in my lifetime.

Voila. There it is, the cold, hard truth of NAFTA's underbelly, still left unaddressed after a quarter century.

Their lives are viewed as cheap, those human lives given no value in this continent's enormous economy. Yet we wouldn't eat without them. We wouldn't recreate without them.

Where is President Trump? Instead of fixing this NAFTA problem, he has sidelined NAFTA renegotiation. Instead of fixing this problem, congressional Republicans passed a GOP tax scam that gives away trillions to the ultra-wealthy—the top 1 percent got 83 percent of the benefits—while adding trillions to our deficit. Meanwhile, workers are facing increased health costs, cutbacks in retirement benefits, unaffordable medicine and healthcare, and rising education costs for their children.

How about that? Instead of carefully targeted trade relief and going after closed global markets, the Trump administration starts a trade war with most of our allies.

It isn't productive that this President of the United States is offending the President of Mexico and the Prime Minister of Canada. Really? Our closest neighbors.

Young people are expressing workplace frustration as well with the jobs in the so-called gig economy with Uber or elsewhere, where a 20-year-old, sure, can work, but with far fewer benefits and much less security and stability.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for a better deal for workers across this continent, starting with an enforceable NAFTA trade pact that has strong labor provisions and a labor secretariat on both the agriculture and industrial side.

I am one of the Democrats willing to work with Republicans and roll up my sleeves to reach that compromise, as difficult as I know it will be.

TAX REFORM AND ECONOMIC HEALTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, proud to share a snapshot of rising wages, more jobs, and increasing opportunity in the Fourth Congressional District of Washington, which I have the distinct pleasure of representing.

In the city of Yakima, unemployment is at 5.5 percent, as reported in April by the Washington Employment Security Department. That number is reportedly the lowest it has been for that month since electronic reporting began in 1990. Yakima County is the most populous county in central Washington and had a May unemployment rate at 6.0 percent, which is the lowest rate in decades.

In another major population center in Washington, the Tri-Cities, unem-

ployment was at 5.2 percent in May. Wages in the Tri-Cities area are up 3.8 percent over 2017 and are among the fastest growing in the State.

The latest jobs report showed decreasing unemployment rates across my district in every single county, with Okanogan at 6.3 percent; Grant, 6.1; Franklin, 5.5; Douglas at 5.2; Benton at 5.1; Adams at 4.8; and Walla Walla at 4.3.

New jobs in construction, food manufacturing, and professional business services are largely driving the regional growth in the labor force. These numbers are more than just statistics, Mr. Speaker. Increasing employment opportunities mean families can provide a more secure future for their children. Graduating students are able to choose from more options after graduation.

My constituents deserve a Federal Government whose policies foster this kind of growth through lower taxes and smarter regulation. We should encourage entrepreneurs by helping, not hurting, growth.

Since tax reform was made law, local businesses in my district, such as Irwin Research & Development and Abbott's Printing in Yakima, have expressed optimism at the prospect of increasing investment and giving earnings to workers rather than the Federal Government.

The ability of businesses to write off the full value of equipment and other assets will help Buhrmaster Baking Company in Yakima plan for equipment upgrades. Chukar Cherries in Prosser has announced a \$1.8 million, 12,000-square-foot expansion, in large part due to tax reform.

Cacchiotti Orthodontics announced hourly raises for their Moses Lake employees thanks to tax reform. Pacific Power, which serves Yakima County, announced that it will pass tax reform savings on to its ratepayers. Washington Federal, with branches in Moses Lake and Quincy, announced 5 percent merit-based increases in wages for all employees earning less than \$100,000, as well as an investment in employee training programs.

Pacific Northwest companies such as Alaska Airlines, Costco, Boeing, Premera Blue Cross, and Starbucks have announced millions in increased benefits, raises, employee education, and nonprofit donations.

To sum it all up, central Washington's economy is experiencing growth, and that is good news for workers and for their families. I will continue to work on behalf of my constituents to promote economic opportunity, and I am proud that this tax reform is working as it was promised to work.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.